...AND OUR VILLAGE SUDDENLY BECAME A NAMELESS HELL!

THEY APPEARED ...

...ON A BEAUTIFUL DAY...

IT WAS 200 YEARS AGO...

ACT VIII : KARAKURI * MACHINERY
"ONCE UPON A TIME / III"

THEY KILLED KIDS...

...TO MAKE TOYS OUT OF THEM?!

PFT ...

WHAT-EVER!

DOH

SHIT!!! WHO DO THEY THINK THEY ARE?!

...THAT COVERED THE WHOLE VILLAGE.

...A STRANGE SILVERY SMOKE...

FROM THEIR MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS CAME...

This smoke homed in on the villagers, as if it had a life of its own.

The smoke entered my throat.

It was thick... practically solid. I felt feverish almost immediately...

I, too, fell victim to it...

...as well as unimaginable pain! I could barely breathe!

YOU WILL NOT ESCAPE THIS SUFFERING UNTIL YOU MAKE OTHERS LAUGH!

YOU ARE NOW INFECTED WITH ZONAPHA'S SYNDROME!

The man in black was shouting...

It was the same for Mary and Tania.

...YOU'LL HAVE TO BECOME PLAYFUL CLOWNS FOR HER!

IF YOU WANT TO BE SAVED ...

COME, NOW! MAKE MY BEAUTIFUL FRANCINE LAUGH!

GUH ...

AH ...

To us... what did "make others laugh" mean?

But we were just simple peasants who worked the soil every day and lived modestly.

WHAT?! THERE'S NO ONE...

...TO MAKE MY FRANCINE LAUGH?!

TAN TAN

HAH ...

TAN TAN

GUH ...

IIIK CLAC

THEY WENT TO HIDE IN THE CHURCH ...

LOOK, FRANCINE! OUR LITTLE CLOWNS WOULD RATHER HIDE BACKSTAGE THAN BE IN OUR LITTLE PLAY!

AAAH!

ARLEQUINO! SHOW THEM THE EXTENT OF YOUR ART!

ZAH

VOF VOF VOF VOF VOF

ZAN

SCHAA

SCHAA

VOF

VOF

VOF

PAH PAH PAH PAH

AAAA

THAT'S FUNNY, ISN'T IT?

CAN YOU HEAR IT, FRANCINE?! IT'S THE CHOIR OF THE DOOMED LITTLE CLOWNS!

HA HA HA!!!

COLOMBINE IS DOING HER BALANCING ACT!

OH!

LOOK, FRANCINE!

CRAC CROC

GOO

HA HA HA !!!

HA HA HA!!!

HA

THERE IS STILL A LITTLE CLOWN LEFT!

WELL, WELL!

GOOH...

It was...

...my oldest daughter!

...I'LL BE THE ONE TO MAKE YOU LAUGH!

FRANCINE, THIS TIME...

AN... GELICA...

LOOK!

but I...

I felt I'd lost all reason...

...would never have let him touch my daughter!

ANGELICA!

JAN JAN JAN

F... FRÄN-CINE!

KLANG

The girl had used her own body to protect the man in black!

And then...

HOW?

BAAF

...with expressionless eyes.

She looked at me...

I saw it all...

Then ...

SCREAM

ARE YOU ALRIGHT?!

FRANCINE!

I AM FINE, DARLING.

YES

This girl was just a machine.

Gears, pieces of metal, tubes, iron wires... that was all there was inside her body!

YES, ALL IS FINE...

HHH

HHH

AH ...

AAAH!

WHF

AND THEM, TOO!

I CREATED HER!

FRANCINE IS NOT A HUMAN BEING!

VLAF VLOF

BUT...

A LITTLE CLOWN DOESN'T NEED TO UNDER-STAND!

YOU'LL NEVER UNDER-STAND!

DON'T KILL MY DAUGH-TER!

I BEG YOU...

LET'S DANCE!

AND NOW, THE GRAND FINALE!

YOU'RE ALL DOOMED!

HA HA! ANYWAY...

...in front of the church that was in blazes!

The automatons started dancing...

These demonic beings had sent my son and all the villagers...

...to hell, without so much as a second thought... without even a shred of emotion.

And I...

I was watching my daughter suffer in silence.

I kept my eyes open to engrave this image in my heart forever!

VVVVH...

THEY REALLY THINK THEY CAN GET AWAY WITH IT?!

LET THEM TRY THAT ONE MORE TIME! I'LL DESTROY THEM ALL!

THE BASTARDS!

SPA

I'M JUST INTERESTED. I'M NOT HERE TO COMMISERATE WITH HER.

AND YOU, YOU ASK THE QUESTION JUST LIKE THAT!

YOU REALLY HAVE NO COMPASSION FOR OTHERS!

THIS HAS GOTTA BE PAINFUL FOR LUCILLE!

HEY, GUY!

BY THE WAY, LUCILLE...HOW DID YOU BECOME A "SHIROGANE"?

THEN ONE DAY, A SORT OF HEALER APPEARED ...

TEN YEARS WENT BY...

...

IT IS ALRIGHT, NARUMI. THAT IS ALL HISTORY NOW.

...AND HE CALLED HIMSELF "SHIROGANE".

This man was dressed very strangely...